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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

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Statement

Introduction

The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, the priority theme under consideration by the 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women, is at the heart of many public service initiatives undertaken by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Several Delta programs are directed at the health and well being of girls, particularly in the African American community.

Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy

Catching the Dreams of Tomorrow, Preparing Young Women For Leadership in the 21st Century, the Delta Academy was created out of an urgent need for bold action to save young females, ages 11-14, from the perils of academic failure, low self-esteem, and crippled futures. It provides opportunities for local chapters to: enrich and enhance education, augment scholarship in math, science, and technology; provide service; and cultivate sisterhood and relationships.

Delta GEMS: Growing and Empowering Myself Successfully

An outgrowth of the Delta Academy, Delta GEMS was created to "catch the dreams" of African American, at-risk, adolescent girls aged 14-18. It provides the framework to actualize those dreams by developing a "can do" attitude. Its goals are:

To instill the need to excel academically;

To provide tools to sharpen and enhance skills for academic success;

To assist girls in goal setting and planning; and

To create compassionate, caring, and community-minded young women

Health Issues Impacting Women and Girls of African Descent

Obesity; HIV/AIDs; and breast, cervical, and ovarian cancers are all health issues impacting women and girls of African descent at disproportionate rates. In 2006, Delta held a conference in Jamaica, commemorating twenty-five years of international summits focusing on health issues of the Diaspora. It raised awareness about the benefits of lifestyle changes that affect longevity, morbidity, and mortality. One of the first priorities was to combat the high incidence of obesity among women and girls.

Delta's international support to prenatal care

Prenatal care and safe birth deliveries are indispensable to the development of healthy young girls. Yet, adequate prenatal and maternity care is often unavailable to women in our ancestral homeland of Africa. Delta historically has recognized this critical issue. In the 1960s, Delta made a

major donation to help finance the construction of Thika Maternity Hospital in Thika, Kenya, the first to open after independence. Delta has maintained its ties to the Hospital, subsequently renamed Mary Help of the Sick Mission Hospital, as it continues to increase its population and improve the infant mortality rate in and around Thika.

Most recently, Delta has been raising funds to contribute to the distribution of maama kits, as part of the WHO initiative for safe birthing in Africa.

Future action

Delta remains committed to working with the international community to effectively eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child, enabling her empowerment in mind, body and spirit.